

*REMARKS*

In response to the Office Action dated December 16, 2003, applicants present the foregoing amendments and following remarks. Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.111, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of each and every ground for the rejection of the claims set forth in the Office Action.

The Office Action rejected claims 8-9, 11-16 and 20-21 under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite. According to the Office Action, the recitation of "the coupling elements" lacks antecedent basis in these claims. In addition, the Office Action rejected claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Mathur et al. U.S. Patent 4,905,758 ("Mathur et al."). In particular, the Office Action indicated that Figs. 1-3 of Mathur et al. anticipate claims 1 and 3.

The Office Action further indicated that claims 4-7, 10 and 17-19 contain allowable subject matter if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In addition, the Office Action indicated that claims 8-9, 11-16 and 20-21 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the §112 rejections as well as including all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Applicants appreciate the Office Action's acknowledgment that these claims contain allowable subject matter. Applicants have recast claim 4 as new independent claim 22. Independent claim 22, as well as claims 5-21 dependent thereon, should be allowable.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to further clarify the distinctions between the subject matter thereof and Mathur et al. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as well as dependent claim 3, are now allowable.

In re Appln. of Petersen et al.  
Application No. 10/018,670

*Conclusion*

For the foregoing reasons, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 3, as well as the objection and/or rejection of the remaining claims 4-21.

Respectfully submitted,



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